MENU PLANNING TOOLBOX



Breakfast CLUB of Canada®

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The purpose of this toolbox is to support program managers in planning nutritious, balanced breakfasts that are appealing to students and aligned with the Breakfast Club's nutritional recommendations. It is based on best practices in sustainable school food.

THE THREE KEY COMPONENTS OF A BREAKFAST

For a breakfast to be complete, it must contain one food item from each of the following three categories:



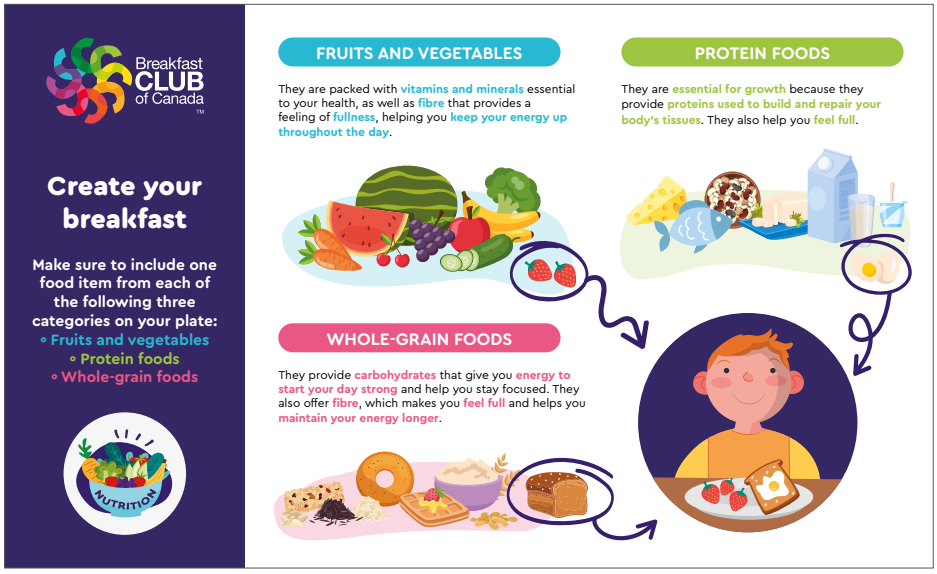
FRUITS AND VEGETABLES: They contain a wide variety of vitamins and minerals essential to health, as well as fiber that helps you feel full and maintain energy levels for longer.



WHOLE-GRAIN FOODS: They are important sources of several nutrients, including carbohydrates and fiber. Carbohydrates give children the energy they need to learn and stay active, while fiber contributes to a feeling of fullness.



PROTEIN FOODS: They are essential for growth and the proper functioning of the body, as they help build, maintain, and repair tissues. They also contribute to a feeling of satisfaction and fullness.



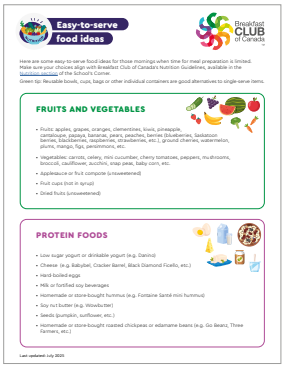
Check out the Create your breakfast tool for more combination ideas. This tool creates an opportunity to talk with students about what goes into a complete breakfast!

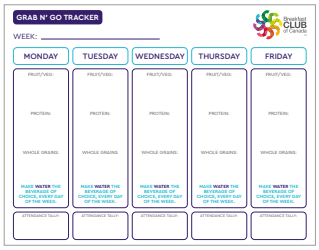
PLANNING PREPARATION

Here is a range of tools that could be useful for your planning:

- The Menu planner can serve as a template for you to fill in.
- The Nutrition Guidelines provide the various parameters to take into account.
- The Single Serving Chart guides you on food quantities.
- The list of Easy-to-serve food ideas helps you select products already approved by the Club.
- The practical guide to Managing food allergies and intolerances.
- The Menus & planners section of School's Corner for inspiring menu ideas.
- Recipe ideas:
  - School's Corner Recipe section
  - Recipe book
  - Big Batch Recipe booklet
  - Leftover-friendly recipe booklet

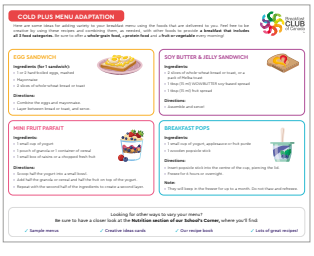














It's also important to consider your available resources: equipment, storage, staff, space, etc., in order to create a menu that is tailored to your reality.

HERE ARE A FEW THINGS TO CONSIDER DURING YOUR PLANNING

Preparation tips

- Prepare mixtures in advance (e.g. dry ingredients).
- Cook in batches and freeze, if possible.
- Plan how to use leftovers by following the tips provided in this tool: Tips on Using Leftovers.



TIPS ON USING LEFTOVERS

Using leftovers helps to avoid wasting food, saves money and makes meal planning easier. Here are some of our tips to help you rethink your leftovers and get creative in the kitchen!

SMART PLANNING TIPS

- **Make more:** Cook additional portions specifically for repurposing (e.g., the broccoli for today's omelettes can be worked into tomorrow's crêpes).
- **Assess your inventory:** Regularly check what base ingredients you have available and what you could make out of them.
- **Embrace creativity:** Use recipes as inspiration and adapt them based on what you have on hand. Involve students by asking for their ideas.
- **Put nutrition first:** Make sure your creation is aligned with BCC's Nutrition Guidelines, with at least one protein food, one whole grain food and one vegetable or fruit.
- **Practise food safety:** Store leftovers properly and consume them within appropriate timeframes.
- **Freeze:** Leftovers that can't be used now can be frozen for another time

CREATING YOUR OWN RECIPES

Use this section to create balanced breakfast combinations:

- Identify leftovers to cook: eggs, day-old or slightly dry bread, fruit, tortillas, yogurt, waffles, cereal, cheese, vegetables, etc.
- Complete the breakfast by making sure to include at least one food from each of the three food groups.
- Determine the method: Bake, blend or assemble your ingredients, or have students assemble their own breakfast.
- Good leftover creations come from experimenting with what you have. Trust your taste buds and try unexpected combinations!

Sourcing strategies

- Follow the local harvest calendar.
- Establish partnerships with local producers.
- Use frozen fruits and vegetables outside of peak seasons.



Cost-cutting strategies

- When possible, shop at discount supermarkets or warehouse clubs.
- Efficient inventory management reduces food waste and, therefore, costs.
- Compare the prices per 100 grams of different foods. This information can be found on the price tag.
- Also consider nutritional value, origin, and packaging format.



HOW TO INTERPRET A NUTRITION FACTS TABLE

The Nutrition Facts table provides relevant information about the content of the various nutrients in a food. Here's how to interpret it:

1. Look at the serving.

2. Look at the lines associated with the nutrients you are interested in. According to the Club's guidelines, we target products as follows:
   - Low in sugar
   - Low in sodium
   - Higher in fibre
   - Less saturated fat

3. The % Daily Value (DV) indicates whether the food contains a small or large quantity of a nutrient. Generally speaking, 5% or less indicates a small quantity of the nutrient, while 15% or higher indicates a large quantity.

Valeur nutritive **Nutrition Facts** pour 1 tasse (250 mL) Per 1 cup (250 mL)	
Calories 110	% valeur quotidienne* % Daily Value*
Lipides / Fat 0 g	0 %
saturés / Saturated 0 g + trans / Trans 0 g	0 %
Glucides / Carbohydrate 26 g	
Fibres / Fibre 0 g	0 %
Sucres / Sugars 22 g	22 %
Protéines / Protein 2 g	
Cholestérol / Cholesterol 0 mg	
Sodium 0 mg	0 %
Potassium 450 mg	13 %
Calcium 30 mg	2 %
Fer / Iron 0 mg	0 %
*5 % ou moins c'est **peu**, 15 % ou plus c'est **beaucoup** *5% or less is **a little**, 15% or more is **a lot**	

HOW TO INTERPRET A LIST OF INGREDIENTS

The list of ingredients shows all the ingredients used in a product, and in what proportions. Ingredients are listed in descending order by weight, meaning that the ingredients at the top of the list are found in greater quantities in the food.

Céréales granola pommes érable 48x40gr
Apple Maple Granola Cereal 48x40gr



Ingrédients: Flocons d'avoine, Sucres (cassonade, sucre, sirop d'érable), Farine de blé entier, Margarine (huile de canola, huile de palme et de palmiste modifiées (soya)), Eau, Pommes séchées, Quinoa soufflé, Arômes naturels, Sel. **Contient : Soya, Blé, Avoine. Peut contenir : Lait, Œufs.**

Ingredients: Rolled oats, Sugars (brown sugar, sugar, maple syrup), Whole wheat flour, Margarine (canola oil, modified palm and modified palm kernel oils (soy)), Water, Dried apple, Puffed quinoa, Naturals flavours, Salt. **Contains: Soy, Wheat, Oat. May contain: Milk, Eggs.**

Regulations require manufacturers to list all forms of sugar together, which is why this example reads "Sugars (brown sugar, sugar, maple syrup)."

Ingredients in parentheses are components of the ingredient preceding them. For example, margarine contains several types of oils.

The term **"contains"** indicates that the product contains one of the 11 priority allergens identified by Health Canada:

- Eggs
- Milk
- Mustard
- Peanuts
- Crustaceans and molluscs
- Fish
- Sesame
- Soy
- Sulphites
- Tree nuts
- Wheat and triticale



The statement **"may contain"** indicates that one or more of these allergens may have come into contact with the product and that there is a risk of cross-contamination.

ARTIFICIAL SWEETENERS AND COLOURING

Both types of additives should be avoided in all food categories.

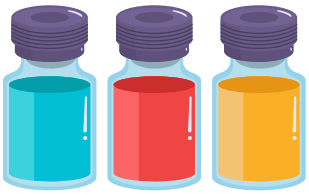
Sweeteners are substances that mimic the taste of sugar. They include:

- Aspartame
- Acesulfame potassium
- Sucralose
- Erythritol
- Maltitol
- Stevia
- Etc.



Artificial colouring is used to add colour to food. Here are a few examples:

- Allura red
- Caramel colour
- Bright blue
- Sunset yellow
- Tartrazine
- Etc.



HERE IS A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO CREATING YOUR MENU.

STEP 1: FOOD SELECTION



First, choose the foods you want to include on the menu. Make sure you have one food item from each category to ensure a complete breakfast. Consider the nutritional criteria for each category.

WHOLE GRAINS FOODS

A whole-grain food is a food made from whole grains or whole-grain flours. This category includes:



- Whole-wheat bread (brown bread) and multigrain bread
- Whole-grain crackers
- Other types of whole-wheat bread (raisin bread, tortillas, English muffins, bagels, etc.)
- Granola bars
- Breakfast cereals
- Grains such as quinoa, brown rice, buckwheat, and others

Our guidelines:

▶ Nutritional criteria

- Aim for < 8 g of sugar per serving, or < 10 g if the product contains fruit
- Limit sodium to <10% DV and saturated fat to < 2 g per serving
- Aim for a minimum of 2 g of fibre per serving

▶ Factors to consider

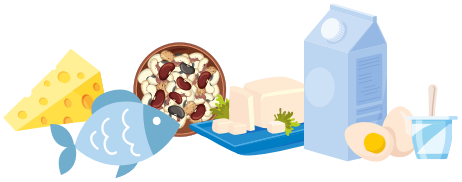
- Choose whole-wheat flour or other whole-grain flours in recipes
- Select products with whole grains (oats, brown rice, barley, quinoa, buckwheat, etc.) among the first ingredients
- Avoid artificial sweeteners and colouring
- Chocolate and products containing chocolate should be reserved for special occasions. To give a recipe a chocolate flavour, opt instead for cocoa powder.
- Please note that the following terms refer to "white flour":
  - Wheat flour
  - Enriched wheat flour
  - Unbleached wheat flour
  - Enriched unbleached wheat flour

Look for the terms "whole" or "whole grain," which mean that the grains are minimally processed and contain more fibre.

PROTEIN FOODS

Protein foods can come from animal or plant sources. Here are some examples:

- Yogurt
- Milk and soy beverages
- Cheese (e.g. mozzarella, Gouda, cheddar, etc.)
- Eggs
- Soy spread or spreads from other seeds (sunflower, pumpkin)
- Seeds (pumpkin, chia, sunflower)
- Legumes (chickpeas, lentils, beans, etc.)
- Meats
- Nuts, peanuts



Careful! Nuts and peanuts are generally prohibited in schools and childcare centres.

Our guidelines:

Nutritional criteria

- Aim for a minimum of 3 to 5 g of protein per serving
- Limit sodium to <10% DV per serving
- Cheese: aim for < 6 g of saturated fat per serving
- Yogurt: opt for the plain, 1–2% milk fat version
- Aim for < 8 g of sugar per serving, or < 10 g if the product contains fruit

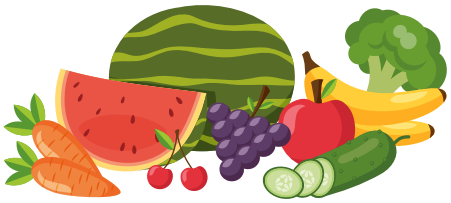
Factors to consider

- Avoid processed meats such as ham, sausages, bacon, cretons, etc.
- Avoid artificial sweeteners and colouring.
- Cream cheese or spreadable cheese does not generally contain enough protein to be classified as a protein food: add another source of protein when it is on the menu.
- Introduce plant-based proteins (seeds, legumes, tofu, etc.) by gradually incorporating them into your menus.
- Plant-based beverages: soy beverage is generally the only plant-based beverage that contains enough protein to fall into this category.

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Fruits and vegetables can be served in various forms, including fresh, frozen, and even as purées. Choose fruits that keep well.

- Berries (raspberries, blueberries, haskap berries, serviceberries, strawberries, blackberries, etc.)
- Bananas
- Carrots
- Cucumbers
- Tomatoes
- Pineapple
- Plums
- Bell peppers
- Etc.



Our guidelines:

- Factors to consider
  - Avoid preparing or choosing a product with added salt or sugar
  - Avoid fried foods and juices
  - Avoid artificial sweeteners and colouring

BEVERAGES

According to Canada's Food Guide, **WATER** should be the beverage of choice at every meal. Drinking water is essential for children's health and is a great way to quench thirst and stay hydrated!

Juices, even if they are made from fresh fruit, contain a significant amount of sugar.

Milk is a beverage that is also considered a source of protein. When serving milk, you are not required to serve another source of protein at that breakfast.

For more information, please consult our tool: Making the best beverage choices for your breakfast program.

CONDIMENTS

Spreads, jams, and other condiments may be served in small quantities as an accompaniment to breakfast. Choose products that are low in sugar, sodium, and saturated fat.


MANAGING FOOD ALLERGIES AND INTOLERANCES

Identify Students with Food Allergies or Intolerances

Cross-Contamination

Allergy Alerts

Auto-injector

Food Delivered by Breakfast Club of Canada

STEP 2: MANAGING ALLERGIES AND INTOLERANCES

Effectively managing allergies is essential to ensure everyone's safety. Please refer to the following document: Food allergies and Intolerances Management.

STEP 3: VERIFICATION AND OPTIMIZATION



- Once you have completed your menu, check the nutritional balance of your breakfasts and make sure you offer a variety of foods in each of the categories.
- Consider varying the colours and flavours of meals to encourage children to try new foods.
- Make sure that the menu is realistic to implement based on your facilities and resources.
- Check that your menu adheres to your purchasing budget.
- Think of strategies for reusing and repurposing leftovers for another day. Consult our tips tool and our recipe booklet on using leftovers.
- Suggestion: survey a few students to get their feedback and impressions about the menu. Feel free to include them in the planning process.
- Send your recipes and menu to your program coordinator to get feedback from the Nutrition Committee, whose purpose is to support you in developing your menu.

STEP 4: MAKING A GROCERY LIST



- Once your menu is finalized, calculate the required quantity of each food/ingredient, based on the number of servings on the menu.
- Check your inventory and figure out what needs to be purchased. Read our document: Manage your food inventory.
- Organize your grocery list into product categories to facilitate the process (fruits and vegetables, whole grains, protein foods, condiments).
- Also, consider all the things you might need for the service. Example: sandwich bags, containers, small items, dishware, soap, etc.

STEP 5: CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT



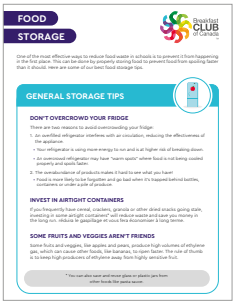
- After introducing your menu, evaluate student satisfaction (by determining the most popular foods, observing reactions, conducting surveys, or using other means to obtain feedback).
- Consider adding new foods or alternating your menu regularly.
- Minimize food waste as much as possible by closely monitoring expiration dates and inventory levels.

HERE ARE A FEW ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS TO TAKE THINGS FURTHER

HYGIENE AND SANITATION BEST PRACTICES

- Take into account the rules and practices of the MAPAQ or of your provincial health authority: Hygiene and sanitation guidelines
- Daily Checklist
- For a Safe Workspace
- Food Storage

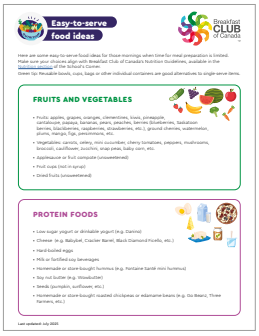




ENVIRONMENTAL BEST PRACTICES

- Opt for reusable containers and bulk products
- Optimize servings to reduce waste
- Repurpose surplus or leftover food
- Compost food waste
- Support local suppliers
- Reduce the use of packaging, if possible
- Consult the document: Top 5 Ways to a Greener Breakfast Program





ADDITIONAL TOOLS

- Monthly Menu Tracker
- Weekly Menu Tracker
- Food Catalogue (Food Procurement programs)
- Easy-to-serve Food Ideas
- Menu Planner Ideas
- Seasonal Menu Planner
- Plant-based Proteins on the Menu
- Swap this for that
- Document Meilleur avant, Bon après? (In French only)
- Toolkit – Financial support breakfast programs
- For more resources, visit our School's Corner.

